Amendments to the Claims

1. (currently amended) A system comprising:

a device ~~for coupling~~ configured to accept and couple at least two medically applicable instruments, said at least two medically applicable instruments being coupled to at least two control apparatuses having different manufacturer-specific input and/or output specifications, said device comprising:

a central control unit configured to coupled ~~to~~ to input and/or output connections of said at least two control apparatuses having different manufacturer-specific input and/or output specifications, said central control unit including:

at least one processor which (i) receives output signals from the at least two control apparatuses having different manufacturer-specific formats and (ii) converts the output signals into a unified format; and

at least one processor which (i) receives inputted control signals, (ii) converts the control signals into formats corresponding to the respective at least two control apparatuses having different manufacturer-specific formats, and (iii) transfers the converted control signals to the at least two control apparatuses to control the at least two medically applicable instruments;

a central input device coupled to the central control unit via a bus; and

a central output display device coupled to the central control unit via a bus;

wherein the bus provides electrical separation between the central input device and/or the central output display device and the central control unit~~; and~~

~~wherein the central input device, the central output device, and the at least two medically applicable instruments are positioned in an operating theater, and the central control unit and the at least two control apparatuses are positioned outside the operating theater~~.

2. (previously presented) The system as set forth in claim 1, wherein the central control unit includes at least one processor, which converts different display information and/or image formats into a predetermined, defined image format.

3. (previously presented) The system as set forth in claim 1, wherein the at least two control apparatuses coupled to the at least two medical apparatus are provided in a rack.

4. (cancelled)

5. (cancelled)

6. (previously presented) The system as set forth in claim 1, wherein the central input device includes at least one of a touch screen, a keyboard, a cursor control unit, a mouse, a joystick, a trackball, a foot switch, a touch pad and a speech input device.

7. (cancelled)

8. (cancelled)

9. (previously presented) The system as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a storage unit for storing data captured by the medical instruments and/or data inputted via the data input device.

10. (previously presented) The system as set forth in claim 6, wherein at least one device forming the system is mounted to a ceiling of an associated operating room.

11-19. (cancelled)

20. (currently amended) A system comprising:

a central control unit configured to coupled to input and output connections of at least two medically applicable instruments via at least two control apparatuses~~, the at least two control apparatuses~~ having different manufacturer-specific input and/or output specifications; and

~~no more than one~~ a common output display device coupled to the central control unit via a bus, wherein the bus provides electrical separation between the common output display device and the central control unit; and

wherein the central control unit is configured to converts different manufacturer-specific display information and/or image formats from the at least two control apparatuses into a predetermined, defined image format such that output data from the ~~one~~ control apparatuses is displayed on the ~~no more than one~~ common output display device.

21. (cancelled)

22. (previously presented) The system as set forth in claim 20, wherein the output display device is a single central input and output display device comprised of a single touch screen display.

23. (cancelled)

24. (currently amended) In a system including at least two medically applicable apparatuses, the medically applicable apparatuses each being coupled to a different control apparatus, the control apparatuses having different manufacturer-specific input and output specifications, a central interface unit coupled to input and output connections of said at least two control apparatuses, wherein the central interface unit includes at least one processor that is configured to converts different manufacturer-specific display information and/or image formats from the control apparatuses into a predetermined, defined image format for display on a ~~single~~ common output display device.

25. (previously presented) The central interface unit as set forth in claim 24 in combination with a single output display device, wherein the central interface unit provides for selective display of data from different medically applicable apparatuses alone or in combination on the single output display device.

26. (new) The system as set forth in claim 1, wherein the central input device, the central output device, and the at least two medically applicable instruments are positioned in an operating theater, and the central control unit and the at least two control apparatuses are positioned outside the operating theater.